Oracle No 7879

THE STATE OF THE FUTURE LIFE, AND THE Present's Order to It:

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Consider'd
By THO. WHITE Gent.

PSAL. 15. 11.

Notas mihi feciſti vias vitæ : adimplebis me lætitiâ cum vultu Tuo : delectationes in Dexterâ Tuâ, uſque in finem.

LONDON,
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Joh. Colbatch, S.T.P.
Trin. Coll. Cant. Socius Senr.

n. S. fec.

To the Reader.

LEast this petty Countriman of ours may seem to impose on the World, or that *emminent Name* which adorns the Front:

'Tis judg'd a duty,
to make It's firſt
breath ptoclame
This but *a Tranſla-*
tion, out of that *La-*
tin Original, which
a powerful Solli-
citour prevayl'd
upon the well-fur-
niſht Charity of
this Authour, ſud-
dainly, to di-
geſt into a perfect
Courſe of Medi-
tations, for the *Spi-*
ritual

ritual exerciſe of the Engliſh *Clergy*.

And now, this free confeſſion obliges it, wiſely, to prevent a ſeverer cenſure, by detecting as ingenuouſly it's farther Imperfections: Preſenting but the juſt half of that Body; nor this, rigorouſly or *verbatim*, but with a fair proportion

tion of Liberty; Wherein, as the different *genius* of ſo diſtinct Languages Vindicates It's providence, thus, to ſecure the ſame clearneſs and *emphaſis* to the ſame very ſenſe; ſo, in the other, the entire fitneſs of this part, by it ſelf, for the *General* uſe, may excuſe it's ſepara-

paration from the reſt, which is but *ſingular* & concerns only the Clergy: Who may civilly be referr'd to the Fountain, if they have any Appetite; whence a prudent compaſſion has drawn this, only for ſuch weak or nice Stomacks, ſoon clog'd with the ſight of Variety,

ty, or more than is just necessary for their own present Refection.

The

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THE STATE OF THE Future Life, AND The Present's Order to it.

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THE FIRST Consideration.

True Felicity, or, the perfect Happiness of a Rational Soul, is the Future Life's Portion.

The First Point.

CONsider. Since Almighty God has ordain'd, for Man, two sorts of Life; One, 1. The future Life preferrable.

in this World, ſhort and full of Miſery; the other in the next, Everlaſting, and, for thoſe that live well here, ſubject to no evill, and abounding with all good: 'Tis evident, this latter is, infinitely and without all compariſon, to be preferr'd.

The ſecond point.

2. Becauſe knowledge, there, more perfect.

AGain. Conſidering that Knowledge is the Good of a Rational Soul; and that no one Object has the leaſt repugnance to any other, as

as to being known, but all (however oppoſite among themſelves) are perfectly conſiſtent in the Underſtanding; the Soul, of its own nature, if not checkt, by union with the body, is capable of knowing all things. Since therefore, through the Obſtruction of the Body in the whole courſe of this Life, ſhe attains to the knowledge of but very few things, and thoſe one by one; whereas, in the next world, ſhe ſhall be freed from all impediment, being either a-

lone, without the Body or absolute Mistriss of it. 'Tis evidently consequent that, knowledg (the Souls good,) in respect of the Object, must hereafter, where 'tis no hindred, infinitely surpass it self, here, whil'st 'tis subject to the Body.

The third Point.

3. God being it's sole Object.

BUt, farther. Considering that all Objects and things, both in their Nature and Number, are limited and finite; except Almighty God, who alone,

one, in his sole Essence, (as in one single Reality and Formality) contains them all and infinite other possibilities, in a more united and infinitely higher kind; whence, He's the sole Object that can render our knowledge perfect, and that only Soul's good whose Vision and Fruition can make us happy: Hence, again, it follows that, since this Object is reserv'd for the next life, its Felicity is incomparably to be preferr'd, before all the Goods and

Happineſs this life can promiſe, much leſs afford, us.

Concluſion.

Therefore, only, to be minded.

CONclude, therefore, and convince thy ſelf that this one, only neceſſary, and Soul-ſatisfying Good ought to be proſecuted and ſought for, even with the neglect of all other intereſts; that the greateſt part of thy life, perhaps, hitherto, has periſh'd and been ſpent in vain: and reſolve ſeriouſly to provide

provide for the future, that, of that little time which, peradventure, is left thee, no day, no hour, no moment pass by, without some progress towards thy obtaining this sole Good.

The second Consideration.

The Delight, which proceeds from the Knowledge & Vision of Almighty God, infinitely excells all other.

The first Point.

1. All delight from the Intellect.

CONsider. Since all delight either consists in Knowledge, or, at least, absolutely depends on it; for, we find, by experience, all the knowledge we

we have, (ev'n ſenſible,) is perfected in the Brain, by help of the Underſtanding: It follows that, All delight, whether Intellectual or Senſual, proceeds from the Soul, as it is Intellectual; and conſequently, that delectation, which comprehends all Intellectual, comprehends, indeed, all manner of delight: Wherefore, the Viſion of God muſt needs contain, in it ſelf, all kind of ſweet contentments, and infinitely exceed all other delights.

The second Point.

2. Whence, God transcends all Corporal Pleasures.

AGain. All temporal and worldly Pleasures consist in a certain Motion and transient succession, which quickly slip away; and can have no greater stability than the time, by which they are measur'd: nor indeed can that be long; for, neither are we able alwaies to eat or drink, *&c.* nor yet alwaies attend or reflect (without which 'tis impossible to take delight) what we do,

do, whilſt wee are in theſe Actions. But, on the contrary, that delight which flows from the Viſion of God is Everlaſting, ſteddy and unchangeable as any fixt and permanent ſubſtance, not enjoyed by piecemeal, never interrupted, as, of neceſſity, all Corporal pleaſures are, in this life; but full and all together and needing no attention, it ſelf Eſſentially reflecting upon it ſelf: So that, it alone exceeds All worldly pleaſures, as far as All time exceeds one Inſtant

Instant, the vast Machin of the world the least Moat we discover in the Sun beams, or the highest Angel a contemptible Worm, and infinitely more, beyond all comparison.

The third Point.

3. He only filling the Soul.

LAstly. All other objects of delight may be cõprehended by our Understanding, may be contemn'd by our Will, as less than our Soul and not able to satisfie it: only Almighty God so fills

fills and overſatisfies, that, entirely poſſeſſing our Affections, He, as it were, forces the Soul to love and delight, more than, of its own nature, it poſſibly could; nor can it ever be weary of the good it enjoys, but ſtill, with its whole and more eager deſire, will hug and cling to its beloved Object; ſo that, a Soul which ſees God ſeeks nothing elſe, but reſts fully ſatisfied &, as it were, lull'd into a dear contentment, wherein it remains ſo abſorpt and wholy raviſht, that it

it ſweetly languiſhes and diſſolves into Spirits and flames of love, the better to ineſſence and incorporate it ſelf into God. Thus, then, thou ſeeſt clearly demonſtrated this great-concerning Truth, that No delight can be comparable to thy Beatitude; and that, 'tis no wonder to hear our Bleſſed Lord and Maſter, in a manner, labour to expreſs it, when He ſaid, *Menſuram plenam, & confertam, & coagitatam, & ſupereffluentem dabunt in ſinus veſtros*, You ſhall be paid

paid with good measure, heap'd up, and press'd down, and thrust together, and yet running over into your Bosoms.

Conclusion.

CONclude, therefore, with a full resolution, by all thy works and best endeavours, and even, if need be, with the hazard and loss of all other Goods, to purchase this *hidden Treasure*, this *precious Pearl*, which at length, though late, thou hast hit on; and, to think nothing

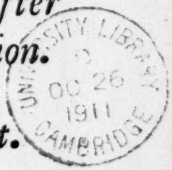
Therefore, fully resolve for Him.

nothing considerable nor to be car'd for, in comparison of this; to pitty the unhappiness of those poor Souls that spend their whole Affections in toys and trifles, of this Life, neglecting this only necessary good; and, to rejoyce in the secret of thy Bosom, that, being vouchsaf'd grace, now, to see that *the wisdom of this world is*, in very truth, *but folly*, it has pleas'd thy kind Lord to number thee, amongst those few that are truly wise.

The

The third Consideration.

The happy State of the Just's Bodys, after their Resurrection.



The first Point.

CONsider. When the last day shall restore thee thy Body again, it shall be endow'd with such a degree of health, as will be most convenient for all thy operations, both Spiritual and Corporal, 1. Gloriously qualify'd.

poral, accompany'd with an incapacity of deficience or Corruption, and wth such an Agility as the most perfect disposition of the Nerves can cause; with access of all possible swiftness, and a power of raising or depressing thy self, at pleasure, as also of consisting with or penetrating any other Body: to all which, thou shalt have such a graceful Comelineſs, with so rare a Beauty of Light and Colour, (whose like shall not be found in any other Body but thine,) that

that, thereby, thou ſhalt become an ornament to the Univerſs; adding ſo peculiar a grace to all the reſt, that, without thee, that whole maſs of glo-riousBodies would ſeem, in a manner, lame and defective.

The ſecond Point.

MOreover. All the laudable actions of thy whole life ſhall be known, to all the Men and Angels, that are or ever were; who, admiring all and every perfe-ction 2. Vniver-ſally ho-nour'd.

fection in them, (even, to the leaſt circumſtances and thoughts that accompany'd them) ſhall, from their very hearts and by the force of truth, love and praiſe thee for them: nay, the very Devils and damned ſouls ſhall honour thee, but with envy, grief, and repentance; and, what may ſeem more ſtrange, thy very ſins ſhall be, then, a glory to thee, both becauſe thou o'recam'ſt and forſook'ſt them, and that, even, in their commiſſion, there was poſſibly ſome

ſome laudable circumſtance, and which avayl'd to thy ſalvation. So that, then, thou ſhalt have ſo many Friends, ſo many Admirers of thy Vertue, as there are Saints and Angels; ſo many VVitneſſes of thine Excellency, as there are damned ſouls and Devils, who, obſtinate in their own malice, by their Torments ſhall confeſs and encreaſe thy Glory.

The

The third Point.

3. Entirely, complyd with.

ADde to this. Neither the Devils nor damned ſouls ſhall be able, in any thy leaſt Motion or Will, to reſiſt thee; all the Saints and Angels ſhall obſerve and comply with thy deſires, more punctually then any obſequious ſervant ever watch'd their Maſters eye; and, no Corporeal nature ſhal be able to conteſt with thee, but all Bodies ſhall obey thee in what ever thou haſt

haſt a mind to: So that, there, thou ſhalt neither want Power, where none ſhall contradict thee, nor Riches, where nothing ſhall be denyed thee.

Concluſion.

COnclude then. Whatever Good thou ſhalt, here forſake, for God and Vertu's Love, will not be loſt; but, there, reſtor'd with Intereſt, whether Friends, Wealth, Honour, or Dominion. Wherefore, doubt not, like a prudent Merchant, to venture

Therefore, here to be ſacrifiz'd up, in hope.

venture thy Goods to the Sea of Fortune, and ſtorms of Perſecution, whence, thou ſhalt find an indefectible Treaſure layd up, in Heaven, for thee; or, like the good Husbandman, to ſow, in the Winter of Adverſities (though with ſome reluctance & ſorrow) thy ſeed in Vertu's ground, expecting the precious fruit it ſhall infallibly yield thee, in the Summer of Eternity: Having ſo firm an aſſurance as the expreſs VVord of God, *They that ſow in tears, ſhall reap in joy.* The

The fourth Consideration.

The intollerable Pains of the Damned, for the Loss of this happy Knowledge and Sight of God.

The first Point.

CONsider. Man's Soul being created for the Vision of Almighty God, (as properly, and more, than a knife is made to cut, any Vessel

1. Equal to the Inclination of a Soul's Nature.

to be fill'd, and all heavy things for their Center;) and a knowing ſubſtance, when it wants the good for which it was made, being very unquiet and full of Pain, and that ſo much the more as it's Nature is more excellent, it's Force greater and Inclination more Violent: It muſt needs follow that, ſuch a Soul, (when it ſhall know what an infinite Good the Almighty is, who alone is able to ſatisfie its Appetite,) will be fill'd with a ſorrow for ſo great a Joſs, equal

equal to the excellency of its Nature and the force of its Inclination. Reflect, then, with what Violence a huge ſtone falls to it's center, or a Mighty Bow of Steel, let looſe, unbends its ſelf, or Powder, ſet on fire, breaks all to make it's way; and, be aſſured the ſorrow of an unhappy Soul (who, now, ſees of what good it remains depriv'd) will be as far more Violent than all theſe, as its Nature and Forces ſurpaſs the activity of the ſtrongeſt Bodies.

The second Point.

2. Aggravated, by the folly of her choice.

AGain. When this poor Soul shall be convinc'd, how slender, base, sordid, fading and almost momentany all those things were, for which it contemn'd and lost this infinite and only Good; that might so easily have been obtain'd, even, with far less pains than were, often, employ'd on those transitory toys; and with far more security, (since, none could hinder it but it

it self; no, not it self deprive it self of this, when once poſſeſt: but for thoſe, there was not the leaſt certainty by never ſo great endeavours, to compaſs them, nor the leaſt hope long to hold them:) VVhen the unhappy Soul ſhall be clearly convinc'd of all this, will it not incomparably encreaſe its grief and infinitely augment its torments, its pains.

The third Point.

3. Especially, a Christian.

But, above all. Those wretched Souls, who, whilst they liv'd in their Bodies, had receiv'd greater Knowledge of this Beatitude, and (by the honour of being *Christians*) had heard and believ'd, both that there was an eternal Happiness provided for them, (if themselves would) and that it incomparably exceeded all temporal Goods and worldly Felicity; yet see, on the other

ther ſide, how they ſpent their whole lives in running after Vanities and traſh, as if they had been *Pagans* and ignorant of Heav'n: ſuch muſt needs, out of this knowledge, fall into an incredible, yet unprofitable, Repentance; and, according to our Saviours ſentence, *be beaten with many ſtripes*, as the VViſe-man explicates, *like great Perſons, be greatly tormented.*

Conclusion.

Therefore, in time, prevent It.

CONclude, with fear and trembling; leſt, what happens to many, and, perhaps, to moſt Chriſtians, may alſo be thy lot: and reſolve, with a conſtant courage, to ſhake off quickly the burthen of all worldly Fears or Affections that hinder thy march to Heav'n; leſt, when Death ſhall ſurprize thee, thou mayſt not, peradventure, find time for Repentance, nor be able to

to alter, in a moment, what thy whole life has been us'd to.

The fifth Consideration.

The unspeakable Pains which the damned Souls shall suffer, through their own disordinate Affections.

The first point.

CONsider. Since a Soul cannot be without desires, but something

1. Missing their unalterable desires.

thing it must Love; wherefore, if it Loves not true Beatitude, it must needs desire false Goods: whence, it will clearly follow that, The Souls of the Wicked, who dye without loving God, must, after death, desire those same goods on which they placed their affections, whilst they liv'd in this World; and, the Acts of a separated Soul being, incomparably, more strong and violent than any it could possibly exercise in the Body, Those Souls must be

be all on fire and, incredibly, burn with perpetual longings after the goods of this life; which, notwithstanding, cannot be had in that *State*, and yet, the desire of such is now grown natural to them, and consequently as unchangeable and immortal as their Nature. They must, therefore, be eternally tormented with a furious, yet fruitless, desire of those things they can never obtain; whence follows a continual Desperation, insufferable grief, and Aversion from

the

the causes of so great evil, *Viz.* Hatred against God and Themselves, and a raging Madness, altogether inexplicable.

The second Point.

2. Incompossible, in themselves.

But, further. It being almost impossible that he, who directs not his life to God, should so settle his Affections on any one temporal thing, as not to be distracted with successive desires of, now, *this*, now, *that*, independent of one another; and all those Acts, which,

in

in this life, are ſucceſſive and at ſeverall times, being, in the next world, altogether and at once in the Soul: It muſt needs follow that, ſuch a Soul, in the next life, deſires, at the ſame time, contrary and incompoſſible things; and ſo, for ever, remains divided in and againſt it ſelf, alwaies at debate and ſtrife with it ſelf and, as if, compounded of ſo many furious beaſts, as it has contrary Paſſions, perpetually biting and tearing one another, without the leaſt

leaſt minute of reſt; becomming, thus, to it ſelf a moſt bitter, ſpiteful and tedious enemy and, which way ſoever it turns, ſtill meeting new goads and ſpears that gore it to the very heart.

The third Point.

3. Which they ſee Eternal.

AND, which is yet more grievous than all the reſt, When theſe unhappy Souls ſhall clearly ſee that theſe evils, into which they have plung'd themſelves, ſhall never have an end, can

can never be leſſen'd with any ſucceſs of time, nor admit of any the leaſt comfort, no, not ſo much as a little Oblivion or not thinking on them, for a Moment; but ſhall alwaies and all at once in a heap o're-whelm & oppreſs them, continually gnawing and eating, yet without conſuming, their very Bowels: what mountains of Calamities, what Etnas of deſpair muſt this needs draw upon them? Do but reflect on your ſelf, what a terrour 'tis wont

wont to ſtrike, when you have ſome time thought of this Eternity, by multiplying hundreds, thouſands, and Millions of years; which, notwithſtanding, when you have gone as far as you are able, is infinitely ſhort of what Eternity is: and, then, tell me what effect you think this ſad conſideration muſt needs produce in the damned; who, by the excellency of their Nature and the State wherein they now are, cannot but behold the horrid countenance of

this

this their accurſed Eternity, truly, and ſuch as, in it ſelf, it is for ever.

Concluſion.

COnclude, then. Since our eternal miſery flows from the habits and affections our Souls acquire in this life, which if miſplac't upon objects unenjoyable in the next, engage us, above all poſſibility of relief, into everlaſting ſorrows and diſtractions. Reſolve, from this hour, from this very moment, to bid adieu

Therefore, regulate the Affections.

dieu to the vanities of this world: and, as you cannot but know that, Nothing ought to be belov'd but for our laſt end, which is, God; ſo courageouſly ſtrive to regulate your Affections, and force them to be ſubject to this only rule of true Reaſon.

The

The sixth Consideration.

Though the Bodies of the damned, by reason of their State, be incorruptible after the Resurrection; yet shall not their Souls be exempt from Corporal pains.

The first Point.

CONsider. As all pleasure, in Man, proceeds from the Soul, so, 1. Extream sorrow including All.

of

of neceſſity, muſt all grief, too; wherefore, as, in the higheſt delight, all kind of pleaſure is contain'd, ſo, in the extreameſt ſorrow, all kind of grief is included: Since, therefore, all the corporal pains we ſuffer are but ſeveral griefs in the Soul; it evidently follows that, in damned Souls, where extream ſorrow reigns, no kind of pain can be wanting. Whence, though their Bodies be in a ſtate of Immutability, and no material Inſtruments of Torment can work on them,

them, after the Reſurrection; yet ſhall not they be free, even, from corporal pains: but feel, incomparably more grievouſly than they ever could in this life, the torments of burning by Fire, the gnawing of Worms and Serpents, the affliction of weeping and wayling, the cauſes of gnaſhing the Teeth, and all Pains whatever have been ſhew'd to holy Perſons in their approved Viſions.

The

The second Point.

2. With, Contempt on all sides.

AGain. When all their wickednesses and most infamous Actions, when every Word and Thought shall, not only, be written in their own Consciences, but layd open to the sight of all the World; those wretched Creatures, of necessity, must then appear, both to themselves and all others, most effeminate, fooliſh and wicked, and, by consequence, most base and infamous; and thereby,

thereby, moſt hateful, even, to themſelves, contemptible to God and his Angels, with all the Bleſſed Souls, nay even, to the very Devils and all the damned crew; but eſpecially, to thoſe once honour'd and belov'd Companions of their wickedneſs, in this world, whom either, whilſt they liv'd, they had courted into their Sins, or been by them allur'd and draw'n into their's; and, ſo, in an inſtant and to all Eternity, become depriv'd of all, even,

even, falſe Friendſhip, vain Honour, and whatever ſeeming Goods they ſo paſſionatly affected and ambitiouſly ſought for, in this life.

The third Point.

3. All hightned, through the ſubjection of the Body.

LAſtly, though their Bodies, then, remain perfectly ſubject to their Souls, yet, ev'n this ſubjection, through the indiſpoſition of their Souls, can only ſerve to render them more miſerable and hateful; their Eyes and Countenances, fram'd according

according to the horror of their guilty Consciences and tormented Thoughts, how can they but be most ugly and abominable? the rest of their Members, in what strange Postures, expressing the distraction of their Minds, beyond all Bedlams for their mad and extravagant deformities? and, if any occasion of Action should be offer'd them, without any Prudence or consideration, at the very first motion, how prone to all wickedness and unable

to resist any evill? Only, secure, by their state of Immutability: Unhappy *Immutability*! which only serves them, never to be chang'd from, but eternally to endure, Torments, that would quickly dissolve any thing less than an immortal Body.

Conclusion.

There-fore Love not thy self here.

CO Conclude, then. *Whoever loves his Soul,* in this life (that is, inordinatly and according to Flesh and Blood) truly *loses it* in the next world

(as

(as our Lord foretold,) and falls into the evills which, here, he labours ſo much to ſhun: but, with a very diſadvantageous advantage; for, by fearing little ills, he falls into infinite great ones and, by declining momentany ſufferings, he runs into eternal. Take up, therefore, (as the Apoſtle exhorts thee) this *Buckler of Faith*, and, by the ſerious conſideration of the next life's future evills, defend thy ſelf *againſt the fyery Darts of thine Enemies*: fight cou-

rageously; and be certain, The best way to avoyd the evills thou art afraid of is, Constantly, to endure them, when God and Reason commands thee.

The

The seventh Consideration.

The Beatifical Vision is the End, whereat we ought principally to aim in all our Actions.

The first Point.

CONsider, first. Since the Vision of Almighty God is the End for which we are created; and that 'tis so excellent a Good that, neither any one nor all other

1. Good or bad, as proportion'd to the End.

things, put together, are any ways cõparable ev'n to the least degree of it: 'tis evident that, *then*, our whole life is *best*, when 'tis best fitted and order'd for obtaining this End; and, if in any part it be ill or less well dispos'd for It, so far 'tis vicious or, at least, imperfect. Wherefore, 'tis the sole business of all prudent Persons, so to order their whole life, (to the utmost of their power,) as may most directly and certainly lead them to attaining this

this happiness: proportionating every Part thereof to the scope of the Whole, and having, still, the End so considerately before their eyes, that all their Actions may be squar'd and levell'd to it.

The second Point.

SEcondly. Since the chief and proper Action of a Man, towards his End, is the *Love* of it; and the highest Good is, above all, to be loved: 'tis evident, Those acti-

2. That Best, which begets a Love to it.

ons and endeavours, to This End, are beſt, which beget and breed in Our ſelves a ſtrong and ſolid *Love* to It. Now, there are two ways or *Mediums* to engender and encreaſe *Love*: One, by purging our hearts from all other Loves and Affections, that ſo we may more freely and entirely attend to this we are in purſuite of; the Other, by conſidering and Meditating on, as well the great Goods contain'd in the End or thing we deſire to Love, as the extream

Evils

Evils that follow or accompany their Loſs or privation. Wherefore, 'tis cleer, Our chief labour and ſtudy ought to be, ſo to order our life, that we may, both often and ſeriouſly, think on this our End and the infinite Happineſs it contains; and that, in all we undertake, our Affections be not corrupted and adulterated with the leaſt *Love* of the things themſelves, but our works be done purely for the *Love* of this bleſſed End, and all our

intentions aym at the encreaſe of this *Love*.

The third Point.

3. Every deliberate Action, important.

THirdly. Since, by every deliberate Action, we aym at ſome End or pretend the attaining ſome Good; which we ſeek, either, purely for it ſelf, without any farther reference, or elſe, intend this as a means to ſome other: 'tis evident that, in every ſuch Action, we love ſomething, as the laſt End for which we do it. If then,

then, it be not done for the love of true Beatitude (which is, the Enjoyment of God;) it must needs follow, we do it only for the love of some false Good, as Pleasure, Riches, or the like; and that, in every such Action, we love some false Good, as our last End. Wherefore, it imports us to walk very cautiously with our God, and purify (all we can) our intentions: seeing no consideration can be surely indifferent, but either advances towards

or

or ſwerves from *our true and only Felicity, His beatifying ſight.*

Concluſion.

Therefore, be careful and diligent.

CConclude, with thākſ. giving to the Almighty, for this ſpecial favour of bringing thee, thus ſeriouſly, to reflect on thy ways: And, if thou findeſt that, hitherto, thou haſt been too negligent, in a buſineſs of ſuch conſequence, ſtrive henceforward to renew in thy ſelf the fervour of Charity, with ſo much

much more care and diligence as thou haſt already loſt time. *Do what good thou canſt in the day of this life*: for, our great *Maſter* tells us, When the night of death ſhal come, it will be too late to help our ſelves, but, ſuch, as we are then found, muſt be our lot for all eternity.

The eighth Consideration.

Piety is conformable to Man's Nature: whence, such as live, according to Vertue, are most happy, even, in this World.

The first point.

1. The mean's to Natur's end truly pleasant.

Consider. Since every one's particular End is that of Humane Nature; and, it cannot stand

ſtand with the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of our Creatour, to have made our Nature other, than ſuch as was fit and conformable to obtain the End, for which it was created: it muſt needs follow that the actions, by which we are to procure this End, are alſo conformable to our Nature: And ſince, What is agreeable to Nature is pleaſant and delightful, it muſt follow again, that, Thoſe Actions are very grateful and ſweet; and therefore a Pious Life, which

which consists of such Actions, is not a crabbed and unpleasant, but, on the contrary, a life full of sweetness and most apt to yield content: And, if some passages in it seem a little harsh, that they are but Medicinal and whereby we are preserv'd from falling into others, far more hurtfull and worse to be digested; wherefore, that These also are sweet in their effect, not only in respect of the Future Life, but even of the Present, and, like a bitter Potion, to

to be ſwallow'd, with a joyful hope of the Health they induce.

The ſecond point.

AGain. Since a Pious life orders the whole courſe of our Actions to one end, ſo rendring them all conformable to one another; it clearly exempts our lives from all inward oppoſition and contradiction, and keeps us in perfect Peace with our ſelves: whereas, on the contrary, a Vicious life,

2. Whence Vertue brings Peace and Vice diſquiet.

life (wich precipitates us, according to our Passions, to follow, now *this*, now, *that* Concupiscence) must needs fill our Souls with repugnant Affections, make us lead a life full of Contradiction, and cast us into those very evils we seek most to fly. And, as all Vices are contrary to our Nature, and cannot be kept subject to *Reason's Rule*; so are they, of necessity, bitter and painful in their effects, pressing their Followers still downward, from evill

to

to worse, till, in death, they tumble them at length, into Hell: where they shall justly complain that, *They have walked thither by difficult and rough ways, and even been weary'd in their Iniquities.*

The third Point.

THirdly. Since our Bodies are made for our Souls, and the Dispositions of the one for the Operations of the other; it follows that, *then*, our Souls best operate,

3. Piety not debarring, ev'n, temporal Contentments.

operate, when our Bodies are best dispos'd, and that Disposition of the Body is, *truly, best*, which is best fitted to the Operations of the Soul; whence, 'tis an errour to think it well with our Bodies, when they are not fit to serve our Soul. And, hence again, it follows that, ev'n Those delights and comforts of the Body, which God has created for it's necessary *Recreation* are not to be deny'd to a *Pious Life*, in their due proportion; that, a

Pious

Pious and Orderly Life, truly and really, more abounds with corporal delights than the Life of the wicked, (as appears to any that conſiders the inconveniences unavoydably flowing from diſorder:) and that, ev'n They who abſtain from thoſe corporal delights, which are enjoy'd in *Marriage* & the poſſeſſion of *Riches*; ſuch find, here, other far greater temporal Pleaſures, incompatible with theſe, as, Honour, Friendſhip, Knowledge, excellent Converſation

sation and the like, which abundantly supply the defect of those materia enjoyments, and rende their Life more sweet and happy, ev'n in this world.

Conclusion.

Therefore, confidently proceed in It.

COnclude, then, without fear to commit thy self to God and a Pious Life: and know that the Almighty has no need of thee, nor made thee for his own sake, but for thine, that thou might'st partake that Hap-

Happiness whereof He was, Essentially, full; and, therefore, He were not wise, but would miss of his End, had He not prepar'd all things convenient to render thee happy. Be thou, then, but confident, and discreetly proceed, and thou shalt quickly find, by experience, what a difference there is between a wicked or negligent, and a truly vertuous and devout Life; how much more pleasant, how much more full of comfort and delight, this is than *that*;

and,

and, how, *sweetly yet strongly*, our wise Creatour has fram'd all the parts of our Felicity, conformable to each other and to the End, for which he has ordain'd us.

The

The ninth Consideration.

God highly esteems our Felicity; then, how ought we to value It.

The first point.

CONsider. Since Almighty God is essentially happy, and in Possession of all Good; and therefore incapable of the least new addition, by his Creatures: 'tis 1. Creating the World, nay Himself, for Man.

evident that, whatever he has created, he made, not for his own, but for thine and thy Brethrens ſake; not to render himſelf, but thee and them happy; and, by conſequence, has valew'd your Felicity, above all the reſt of his works. Behold, therefore, Heaven, Earth, and Sea, and all the Creatures wherewith he has ſtor'd & adorn'd them, created for thee and to bring thee to happineſs, nor cared for but as means to that End: And (which is yet infinitely

infinitely more, ev'n beyond all amazement) see the Divinity it self humbled and impoverish't to raise and enrich thee; Him, whom, but now, wee concluded through his own fulness incapable of encrease, devested for thy sake, of all his Royal Priviledges, and cloth'd with all our miseries and infirmities: For, what know we, amongst the whole mass of Creatures, so distressed and helpless as a poor Infant newly born? what, so subject to

all kind of contingencies, and inconveniencies? what, requiring so much care and industry, to nurse and breed up to its perfection? Thank on every particular, and see, at how high a rate, the unerrable judgement of the Almighty has valew'd thy happiness.

The second Point.

2. Passing through so painful a Life and Death.

BUt again. Consider the whole Life and Death of *this poor God*, pillag'd of his own, to purchase thy glory. See

a

a Life of three and thirty long years endur'd, in cõtinual neceſſities, labours, moleſtations, and contradictions. How often was it neceſſary that this moſt meek and innocent Lamb, who *never brake a bruſed Reed, nor quench'd the ſmoaking Flax*, ſhould (to give thee an example of Patience) undergoe the anger and indignation of his enemies? How often, to teach thee Meekneſs and Humility, was He to be chidden, threatned, reproach'd and blaſphem'd, without once

op'ning his mouth to reply? What ſhall I ſay of his Travayls, Sweats, Wearineſs, Lying without dores, Watching whole nights in Prayer, Faſting, Poverty, not having a Houſe wherein to ſhrow'd his Head, living on Alms, continual Dangers and Flying from one place to another; eſpecially in the laſt three years of his Life? O, but His End! Conſider his Anguiſh in the Garden, the manner of his Apprehenſion, his leading, or rather, dragging from one

one Tribunal to another; all ſorts of contempt, all manner of inſolent and abuſive revilements: weigh the Pains he ſuffer'd in the moſt tender and ſenſible parts of his Body; His being Betray'd by One, and Forſaken by the reſt of his Diſciples; the doleful preſence of his deareſt Mother, and other afflicted Friends: In fine, his ignominious Death, and the effuſion of the laſt drop of his Blood, for thy Redemption and eternal Happineſs.

The third Point.

3. Feeding us with Himself.

LAstly. Consider how, not content with all this, He spar'd not his Glorious Body, but ordain'd even That, too, to serve as a means for thy Felicity: leaving himself to thee in the Blessed Sacrament, under the forms of Bread and Wine; not only to be seen and adored, but ev'n to be handled, broken, chew'd, swallow'd and incorporated by thee: for all this, is as truly, and really verify'd

verify'd of him, inveſted with the Accidents or forms of Bread and Wine, as it would be of the Bread it ſelf, were it taken before Conſecration; and It's connatural Accidents are, now, as truly, Thoſe of His Body, as they were of the Bread, whilſt it continu'd ſuch. Add, now, to this, all the Injuries and indignities that are offer'd his Sacred Perſon (as it lyes veyl'd under thoſe Accidents, for thy Love) whether by Negligence, of inconſiderate Servants,

or Malice of wicked Sinners: and see to what a pitch his Charity to thee is heightned, which has made Him, in a manner, prefer thee before Himself.

Conclusion.

Therefore, value thy Salvation.

CONclude, therefore. Since thou neither mayst nor canst doubt, but that the judgement of thy God is most certain, impartial and unerrable; what care and esteem oughtst thou to have of thine own Salvation?

vation? what Sollicitude, to ſeek the means of attaining It? what diligence to omit nothing in order to aſſure It? whereof thou ſee'ſt him ſo induſtriouſly careful, who is no wayes concern'd (more than out of pure Goodneſs) whether thou bee'ſt a ſav'd Soul or no; and yet, whom even Goodneſs it ſelf could not ſo tranſport, as to make him think any price too high to procure thee Felicity.

The

The tenth Consideration.

The great Benefits Mankind has receiv'd by Christ's comming into the World.

The first Point.

1. Rendred, easily capable of high Mysteries.

CONsider, first. By this most wise Oeconomy and gracious dispensation of Christ, (great *Steward* of God's house, the Church,) Mankind

Mankind is made capable of admirable Secrets and high Myſterys; and has attain'd a moſt certain knowledge of them: for, who ſo ſimple, that cannot beleeve what is told him, when nothing elſe is requir'd? and what can be ſo firm and certain, either to our Senſes or Underſtandings, as the Word of God? for, ſince, by It, all other things were made, and, from It, had their Natures; It, doubtleſs, in It ſelf, is far more ſecurely conſtant and fixt, than

the

the very ſubſiſtence of all created Beings, and thoſe Cauſes, *à priore*, that give a certainty to our Demonſtrations. And, hence 'tis that, now, whole Nations of People, learned and ignorant, wiſe and ſimple, every ſilly old Woman clearly conceives and moſt firmly believs the Immortality of the Soul, the Condition of the good and wicked after Death, the Eternity of Pains or Pleaſures that attend us, with other moſt important Verities; concerning which,

which, we find very little amongst the Philosophers, as, whereat, the greatest Wits of them but groap'd, like blind Men.

The second Point.

AGain. By Christ's Example wee are strongly encourag'd to all Vertue. Can there be any so faint-hearted, as not to dare Venture himself the same way he sees his Captain pass before him; who, he's sure, both knows the best and secure-

2. Encourag'd by His Example.

cureſt Path to ſalvation, and is ſo perfectly good that, even in his Voice, he cannot deceive, much leſs counterfeit in his Actions? When, we ſee him, then, chooſe for himſelf the ſame things he propoſes to us, and tread out the way which he would have us walk; nay, when we ſee him, not only, Live and Dye in this way, but, Riſe again and enter the Poſſeſſion of thoſe Glories he woos us to hope for: can we any lõger doubt whether we ſhould follow his

his foot-steps, and beat the same Path? or shall we not confidently aspire to the Happiness? he so faithfully has promis'd and so dearly purchas'd?

The third Point.

BUt, above all. By this Grace of Christ, our Charity to God is extreamly heightned & by degrees excessively strange and remarkable; for, First, whereas God was invisible and inaccessible, ev'n to our very thoughts, before,

3. Endear'd by His suffe-rings.

before; He's, now, become a Man like us, expos'd to the apprehension even of our ſenſes, that moſt eaſy and obvious way of our knowing. Next, by this gracious condeſcendence, He has eſpous'd all the Titles that may endear our Affections; having made himſelf our Maſter, our Friend, our Companion, our Brother, His Father to become ours, and himſelf a Member of the ſame Body with us. And knowing that, as it is the greateſt poſſible

ble teſtimony of Love, *to ſuffer for a Friend*, ſo 'tis the moſt effective means to beget a mutual Love; our Heavenly Father (deſirous to ſettle a perfect correſpondence, in That, betwixt his *only Begotten*, and us, his adopted Sons) ſent Him into this world to ſuffer, for our ſakes, all kind of evils, all manner of contempts, all ſorts of injuries, miſeries, torments, and a moſt ſhameful Death, *Sic Deus dilexit Mundum, ut Filium ſuum unigenitum daret pro mundi Vitâ*:

Vitâ. To ſuch a point did God love us, as to give up, even to death, for our Life, his only, his equal, his coeſſential, and conſubſtantial Son. Nor was This Son leſs forward and willing to accept, than his Father to enjoyn him all this, for us; but as his Apoſtle ſays, *Dilexit me, & tradidit ſeipſum pro me.* He lov'd me, and ſo lov'd me, as to Live in miſeries, and Dye with torments, for me. Nor, did his love end with his Life: Since, though it was neceſſary to

to withdraw his Corporal Presence from our senses, yet *Love* would not let him entirely be absent; but wittily found out this stupendious Invention, to remain with us in the Blessed Sacrament, not only, to be seen and ador'd by our Faith, but really, to incorporate and mingle his Flesh with ours, making himself the nourishment both of our Souls and Bodies. In fine, by this his Oeconomy and the powring out of his Holy Spirit, and changing,

changing, in a manner, the whole World (at leaſt, ſo far as concern'd Mens Souls) through the innumerable Miracles wrought by Himſelf and his Followers, to the Converſion of Nations; he has rendred thoſe things eaſy to us, by the cuſtom of hearing and ſeeing them done by others, which, before, ſeem'd almoſt impoſſible and not to be imitated; and ſo, taken away the greateſt hinderances of our Love to him.

Conclusion.

CONclude, therefore. Now ther's no excuse left, but an absolute necessity impos'd on thee to live holily; the means thereof being rendred both so easy & familiar to thee, and so laudable, too, amongst Men, that 'tis almost a shame and counted worthy of reproach to live otherwise. What canst thou, then, pretend, what allege, to exempt thy self? No; Almighty God has so ensnar'd and hedg'd

Therefore, inexcusably, be good.

hedg'd thee in, on every side, with obligations to be Vertuous; that thou canst not, now, without great inconveniences, ev'n in this world, be Vicious. All things invite thee, All things allure thee, All things, in a manner, compel thee to be good: O follow! and follow willingly.

The eleventh Consideration.

Meekness and Humility is the readiest way to Happiness, not only hereafter, but ev'n in this Life.

The first point.

CONsider. Though our Saviour was vouchsaf'd us, both as a Master and Model of all Vertues, and a perfect Pattern 1. No Christian revengeful.

Pattern for all the Actions of our whole Life; yet two Vertues we find, especially, particularly and, in a manner, only recommended to us, Meekness and mutual Charity; the first he enforces on us, in these sweet words, *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your Souls.* Behold, therefore, if thou wilt be a Christian, thou must very carefully practise this Vertue; nor, indeed, canst thou challenge that name unless thou,

thou, at leaſt, endeavour to become Meek and Humble; and, ſo far only, thou mayſt judge thy ſelf to have profited in the School of Chriſt, as thou find'ſt thy ſelf advanc'd in the progreſs of this Vertue. Now, what is this humble Meekneſs, ſo highly commended to us by our great Maſter? but A ſweetneſs of Diſpoſition, which makes us not ſeek Revenge or *render evill for evill*, no, not, even, in deſire. That, then, thou art here commanded, is, When thou

ſuffereſt an injury, not to render nor wiſh any harm to the Perſon that did it; unleſs, by way of correction, to ſuch as are under thy charge, and even then, to be ſure the puniſhment be inflicted for Love of them, not thy ſelf, for their amendment, not thy ſatisfaction.

The ſecond point.

2. All anger unreaſonable.

Conſider. 'Tis irrational and not becomming a Perſon of underſtanding to wiſh evill to another, becauſe he has

has offended thee. For as, if thou ſhouldſt fall into a Ditch or a ſtone fall upon thee, it were unreaſonable to be colerick at the Ditch or ſtone, and ſeek revenge like a Dog: ſo, no leſs folly is it to be angry with a Perſon, for doing thee a diſpleaſure. Since, either 'tis done juſtly or unjuſtly: if juſtly, thou oughtſt to turn thine anger on thy ſelf, for deſerving it, and not on the doer; if unjuſtly, then certainly he was unjuſt before he did it; and if

thou then, wert not angry with him for being unjuſt, neither oughtſt thou be, now, for his doing unjuſtly: it being but natural and what, in reaſon, thou ſhouldſt expect, that an unjuſt Perſon ſhould do unjuſt things. Again: ſince no humane Action or Deſire is reaſonable, which aims not at ſome good to him that wills or does it; and Revenge ayms only at the Evill of the Offender, which is, no ways, thy Good, but meerly as a ſatisfaction of thy vindicative

cative appetite: in reaſon, thou oughtſt not to wiſh anothers ill, but rather repreſs thine own unreaſonable Humour.

The third Point.

CONſider the Reward promis'd thee by our kind Maſter, for Meekneſs. *You ſhall find reſt*, ſays he, *to your Souls*; and, in another place, *Bleſſed are the Meek, for they ſhall poſſeſs the Land*; and again, *In your Patience* (that is, Meekneſs) *you ſhall poſſeſs* (that is, enjoy)

3. Meekneſs, alone, ſweetens Life.

enjoy) *your Souls*: Of all which, the ſenſe is, that, beſides the Reward in Heaven, the greateſt ſweetneſs this preſent Life affords, *viz.* A quiet and contented mind, is properly and peculiarly reſerv'd for the Meek as a recompence of their Vertue. Whereas, thoſe that ſeek Revenge, are alwaies in contention and at debate with one another; which, for the moſt part, coſts their Purſes well in Sutes and Law-wranglings, and many times their skins, even

even their Lives, too, in desperate quarrels: Besides, within, what tumults of Passion are rais'd in their Souls? what cares, what fears continually disquiet and torment them? that, they neither enjoy themselves, nor even the temporal blessings God has given them. 'Tis Meekness alone, then, you see, affords contentment and sweetens our whole Life.

Concluſion.

Therefore, ſtrongly embrace It.

COnclude, then. What a good God wee ſerve! who is ſo ſollicitous, as for our Future, ſo even for our Preſent happineſs, that hee's pleas'd, not only, moſt tenderly to recommend and, with ſweet words, allure us to it, but even, to introduce them by exhibiting himſelf to us, as a Maſter and Pattern of thoſe means, by which true temporal comforts and contentments (as much

much as this preſent Life admits) are to be obtain'd. What evaſion can there be from ſuch kindneſs? what excuſe from ſo important, ſo pleaſant an Intereſt? No: either renounce the name of Chriſtian, or reſolve to addict thy ſelf ſeriouſly to the exerciſe of this Vertue.

The

The twelfth Consideration.

Fraternal Charity is the true Mark of a good Christian, and the only sure way to eternal Happiness.

The first Point.

1. Appropriated to the Law of Grace.

CONsider, first. Our Lord and dear Master, to fix on us a greater necessity and, as it were, a double tye of mutual

tual Love and Charity to one another, was pleas'd, not only, to ſtrengthen the old Cõmandement of *loving our Neighbour as our ſelf*, by commanding it anew as from himſelf, when he ſaid, *I give you a new Command*, and *This is my Commaṅd, that you Love one another*; but alſo, in moſt particular manner, to recommend and appropriate it to the Law of Grace, as a ſpecial Mark and Sign of Chriſtianity, whereby true Chriſtians are diſtinguiſht from falſe. *By this, men*

ſhall

shall know that you are my Disciples, If you Love one another. Since, therefore, true Love is never idle, nor consists in words only, but is active, according to its power; 'tis evident, That which Christ commands us is that we *be alwaies ready, as much as in us lys, to do good to all Men, but especially to those that are truly Brethren*, that is, good Christians.

The second Point.

AGain consider. Since, as the Apostle says, *He that Loves his neighbour, has fulfill'd the Law*; 'tis evident this mutual Charity ought to be embrac'd, not only, as a particular Vertue, but, as the common Mother and producer of all the rest. For, if *he that loves his Neighbour has fulfill'd the Law*, the whole Law, then, is nothing but of *Love* and doing good to our neighbour. Wherein admire

Wherein, every one has an advantage.

admire the tender goodneſs of God, whoſe care and providence tends wholy to this, That it may be well with all and every one of us: See how, by that Law which commands thee to do good to all thou canſt, by that very ſame Law, all and every other perſon is commanded to do thee what good they can. O! how holy is this Law of Chriſt, which ſo carefully provides for the welfare and advantage of all? but, withall, how profitable, how gainfull to thee?

thee? since, for that little good thou canst do to others, it obliges all others, readily, to do thee all the good they can; which must needs be infinitely more than what thou art able to do for them.

The third Point.

LAstly. Consider *the beloved Disciple* St. *John's* words, *He that loves not his Brother, whom he sees, how can he love God whom he sees not?* and observe that the love of thy

3. The Touch-stone of our Love to God.

thy Neighbour must be the Touchstone, whereon to try thy love to God, whether indeed, it be true or a counterfeit and, as they say, but a Lip-love, having God in thy Mouth, but in thy heart the World. For, if thou lov'st not thy Neighbour, 'tis evident thou lov'st something else, that hinders thee from loving him; which (because it cannot be God) must needs be some created good, as Honour, Riches, Pleasure, &c. which thou lovest inordinately, that is,

is, for it self, and not in order to God; and so, clearly, as long as thou lov'st not thy Neighbour, thou hast not God for thy last end, nor lov'st him above all things, as is thy duty; for, as much as thou lovest God, so much more, doubtless, thou lovest those things he loves; amongst which, the chiefest (if not the only thing, we know) is our Neighbour: whose love, even by Nature, is so recommended to us, that, without friendship and conversation with one

one another, our very lives would be tedious and miserable.

Conclusion.

Therefore, improve It's occasions.

CONclude, therefore, with a serious and effectual Resolution, in Truth and Actions, to love thy Neighbour; to contemn none, to refuse none in what thou art able to help them; but, whatever good thou canst do to any person (without prejudicing thy self (even with a little prejudice to thy self, when

when 'tis much for his advantage) to do it chearfully and willingly: be glad when thou haſt oblig'd any, eſteeming that day loſt wherein thou haſt done good to none: And, be certain, this Practice will be ſo far from injuring thee, that nothing will more advantage, nothing render thee more grateful and acceptable both to God and Man.

FINIS.

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THE STATE OF THE FUTURE LIFE, AND THE Present's Order to It:

Consider'd

By THO. WHITE Gent.

PSAL. 15. 11.

Notas mihi feciſti vias vitæ : adimplebis me lætitiâ cum vultu Tuo : delectationes in Dexterâ Tuâ, uſque in finem.

LONDON,

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

929

To the Reader.

LEast this petty Countriman of ours may seem to impose on the World, or that *emminent Name* which adorns the Front:

'Tis judg'd a duty,
to make It's firſt
breath ptoclame
This but *a Tranſla-*
tion, out of that *La-*
tin Original, which
a powerful Solli-
citour prevayl'd
upon the well-fur-
niſht Charity of
this Authour, ſud-
dainly, to di-
geſt into a perfect
Courſe of Medi-
tations, for the *Spi-*
ritual

ritual exercise of the Englisſh *Clergy*.

And now, this free confeſſion obliges it, wiſely, to prevent a ſeverer cenſure, by detecting as ingenuouſly it's farther Imperfections: Preſenting but the juſt half of that Body; nor this, rigorouſly or *verbatim*, but with a fair proportion

tion of Liberty; Wherein, as the different *genius* of so distinct Languages Vindicates It's providence, thus, to secure the same clearness and *emphasis* to the same very sense; so, in the other, the entire fitness of this part, by it self, for the *General* use, may excuse it's se-

para-

paration from the reſt, which is but *ſingular* & concerns only the Clergy: Who may civilly be referr'd to the Fountain, if they have any Appetite; whence a prudent compaſſion has drawn this, only for ſuch weak or nice Stomacks, ſoon clog'd with the ſight of Variety,

ty, or more than is
juſt neceſſary for
their own preſent
Refection.

The

The Contents.

Being these Considerations following.

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2. *The Delight, which proceeds from the Knowledge and Vision of Almighty God, infinitely excells all other.*

3. *The happy State of the Just's Bodys, after their Resurrection.*

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5. *The unspeakable Pains which the damned Souls shall suffer, through*

through their own disordinate Affections.

6. Though the Bodies of the damned, by reason of their State, be incorruptible after the Resurrection; yet shall not their Souls be exempt from Corporal pains.

7. The Beatifical Vision is the End, whereat we ought principally to aim in all our Actions.

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10. The great Benefits Mankind has receiv'd by Christ's coming into the World.

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THE STATE OF THE Future Life, AND The Present's Order to it.

THE FIRST Consideration.

True Felicity, or, the perfect Happiness of a Rational Soul, is the Future Life's Portion.

The First Point.

CONsider. Since Almighty God has ordain'd, for Man, two sorts of Life; One, in

1. The future Life preferrable.

in this World, short and full of Misery; the other, in the next, Everlasting, and, for those that live well here, subject to no evill, and abounding with all good: 'Tis evident, this latter is, infinitely and without all comparison, to be preferr'd.

The second point.

2. Because knowledge, there, more perfect.

AGain. Considering that Knowledge is the Good of a Rational Soul; and that no one Object has the least repugnance to any other,

as

as to being known, but all (however oppoſite among themſelves) are perfectly conſiſtent in the Underſtanding; the Soul, of its own nature, if not checkt, by union with the body, is capable of knowing all things. Since therefore, through the Obſtruction of the Body in the whole courſe of this Life, ſhe attains to the knowledge of but very few things, and thoſe one by one; whereas, in the next world, ſhe ſhall be freed from all impediment, being either a-

lone, without the Body, or absolute Mistriss of it: 'Tis evidently consequent that, knowledge (the Souls good,) in respect of the Object, must hereafter, where 'tis not hindred, infinitely surpass it self, here, whil'st 'tis subject to the Body.

The third Point.

3. God being it's sole Object.

But, farther. Considering that all Objects and things, both in their Nature and Number, are limited and finite; except Almighty God, who a-

lone,

lone, in his sole Essence, (as in one single Reality and Formality) contains them all and infinite other possibilities, in a more united and infinitely higher kind; whence, He's the sole Object that can render our knowledge perfect, and that only Soul's good whose Vision and Fruition can make us happy: Hence, again, it follows that, since this Object is reserv'd for the next life, its Felicity is incomparably to be preferr'd, before all the Goods and

Happineſs this life can promiſe, much leſs afford, us.

Concluſion.

Therefore, only, to be minded.

CONclude, therefore, and convince thy ſelf that this one, only neceſſary, and Soul-ſatisfying Good ought to be proſecuted and ſought for, even with the neglect of all other intereſts; that the greateſt part of thy life, perhaps, hitherto, has periſh'd and been ſpent in vain: and reſolve ſeriouſly to provide

provide for the future, that, of that little time which, peradventure, is left thee, no day, no hour, no moment pass by, without some progress towards thy obtaining this sole Good.

The second Consideration.

The Delight, which proceeds from the Knowledge & Vision of Almighty God, infinitely excells all other.

The first Point.

1. All delight from the Intellect.

CONsider. Since all delight either consists in Knowledge, or, at least, absolutely depends on it; for, we find, by experience, all the knowledge we

we have, (ev'n ſenſible,) is perfected in the Brain, by help of the Underſtanding: It follows that, All delight, whether Intellectual or Senſual, proceeds from the Soul, as it is Intellectual; and conſequently, that delectation, which comprehends all Intellectual, comprehends, indeed, all manner of delight: Wherefore, the Viſion of God muſt needs contain, in it ſelf, all kind of ſweet contentments, and infinitely exceed all other delights.

The second Point.

2. Whence, God transcends all Corporal Pleasures.

AGain. All temporal and worldly Pleasures consist in a certain Motion and transient succession, which quickly slip away; and can have no greater stability than the time, by which they are measur'd: nor indeed can that be long; for, neither are we able alwaies to eat or drink, *&c.* nor yet alwaies attend or reflect (without which 'tis impossible to take delight) what we do,

do, whilſt wee are in theſe Actions. But, on the contrary, that delight which flows from the Viſion of God is Everlaſting, ſteddy and unchangeable as any fixt and permanent ſubſtance, not enjoyed by piecemeal, never interrupted, as, of neceſſity, all Corporal pleaſures are, in this life; but full and all together and needing no attention, it ſelf Eſſentially reflecting upon it ſelf: So that, it alone exceeds All worldly pleaſures, as far as All time exceeds one

Inſtant

Instant, the vast Machin of the world the least Moat we discover in the Sun beams, or the highest Angel a contemptible Worm, and infinitely more, beyond all comparison.

The third Point.

3. He only filling the Soul.

LAstly. All other objects of delight may be cõprehended by our Understanding, may be contemn'd by our Will, as less than our Soul and not able to satisfie it: only Almighty God so fills

fills and overſatisfies, that, entirely poſſeſſing our Affections, He, as it were, forces the Soul to love and delight, more than, of its own nature, it poſſibly could; nor can it ever be weary of the good it enjoys, but ſtill, with its whole and more eager deſire, will hug and cling to its beloved Object; ſo that, a Soul which ſees God ſeeks nothing elſe, but reſts fully ſatisfied &, as it were, lull'd into a dear contentment, wherein it remains ſo abſorpt and wholy raviſht, that it

it ſweetly languiſhes and
diſſolves into Spirits and
flames of love, the better
to ineſſence and incor-
porate it ſelf into God.
Thus, then, thou ſeeſt
clearly demonſtrated this
great-concerning Truth,
that No delight can be
comparable to thy Bea-
titude; and that, 'tis no
wonder to hear our Bleſ-
ſed Lord and Maſter, in
a manner, labour to ex-
preſs it, when He ſaid
Menſuram plenam, & con-
fertam, & coagitatam, &
ſupereffluentem dabunt in ſi-
nus veſtros, You ſhall
paid

paid with good measure, heap'd up, and press'd down, and thrust together, and yet running over into your Bosoms.

Conclusion.

CONclude, therefore, with a full resolution, by all thy works and best endeavours, and endeaven, if need be, with the hazard and loss of all other Goods, to purchase this *hidden Treasure*, this *precious Pearl*, which at length, though late, thou hast hit on; and, to think nothing

Therefore, fully resolve for Him.

or ſwerves from *our true and only Felicity, His beatifying ſight.*

Concluſion.

Therefore, be careful and diligent.

COnclude, with thākſgiving to the Almighty, for this ſpecial favour of bringing thee, thus ſeriouſly, to reflect on thy ways: And, if thou findeſt that, hitherto, thou haſt been too negligent, in a buſineſs of ſuch conſequence, ſtrive henceforward to renew in thy ſelf the fervour of Charity, with ſo much

much more care and diligence as thou haſt already loſt time. *Do what good thou canſt in the day of this life*: for, our great *Maſter* tells us, When the night of death ſhal come, it will be too late to help our ſelves, but, ſuch, as we are then found, muſt be our lot for all eternity.

The

The eighth Consideration.

Piety is conformable to Man's Nature: whence, such as live, according to Vertue, are most happy, even, in this World.

The first point.

1. The mean's to Natur's end truly pleasant.

CONsider. Since every one's particular End is that of Humane Nature; and, it cannot stand

ſtand with the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of our Creatour, to have made our Nature other, than ſuch as was fit and conformable to obtain the End, for which it was created: it muſt needs follow that the actions, by which we are to procure this End, are alſo conformable to our Nature: And ſince, What is agreeable to Nature is pleaſant and delightful, it muſt follow again, that, Thoſe Actions are very grateful and ſweet; and therefore a PiousLife, which

which consists of such Actions, is not a crabbed and unpleasant, but, on the contrary, a life full of sweetness and most apt to yield content: And, if some passages in it seem a little harsh, that they are but Medicinal and whereby we are preserv'd from falling into others, far more hurtfull and worse to be digested; wherefore, that These also are sweet in their effect, not only in respect of the Future Life, but even of the Present, and, like a bitter Potion,

to

to be ſwallow'd, with a joyful hope of the Health they induce.

The ſecond point.

AGain. Since a Pious life orders the whole courſe of our Actions to one end, ſo rendring them all conformable to one another; it clearly exempts our lives from all inward oppoſition and contradiction, and keeps us in perfect Peace with our ſelves: whereas, on the contrary, a Vicious life,

2. When Vertue brings Peace and Vi diſquie

life (wich precipitates us, according to our Passions, to follow, now, *this*, now, *that* Concupiscence) must needs fill our Souls with repugnant Affections, make us lead a life full of Contradiction, and cast us into those very evils we seek most to fly. And, as all Vices are contrary to our Nature, and cannot be kept subject to *Reason's Rule*; so are they, of necessity, bitter and painful in their effects, pressing their Followers still downward, from evill to

to worſe, till, in death, they tumble them at length, into Hell: where they ſhall juſtly complain that, *They have walked thither by difficult and rough ways, and even been weary'd in their Iniquities.*

The third Point.

THirdly. Since our Bodies are made for our Souls, and the Diſpoſitions of the one for the Operations of the other; it follows that, *then*, our Souls beſt operate,

3. Piety not debarring, ev'n temporal Contentments.

operate, when our Bodies are best disposd, and that Disposition of the Body is, *truly, best*, which is best fitted to the Operations of the Soul; whence, 'tis an errour to think it well with our Bodies, when they are not fit to serve our Soul. And, hence again, it follows that, ev'n Those delights and comforts of the Body, which God has created for it's necessary *Recreation* are not to be deny'd to a *Pious Life*, in their due proportion; that, a

Pious

Pious and Orderly Life, truly and really, more abounds with corporal delights than the Life of the wicked, (as appears to any that conſiders the inconveniences unavoydably flowing from diſorder: and that, ev'n They who abſtain from thoſe corporal delights, which are enjoy'd in *Marriage* & the poſſeſſion of *Riches*; ſuch find, here, other far greater temporal Pleaſures, incompatible with theſe, as, Honour, Friendſhip, Knowledge, excellent Converſation

ſation and the like, which abundantly ſupply the defect of thoſe material enjoyments, and render their Life more ſweet and happy, ev'n in this world.

Concluſion.

Therefore, confidently proceed in It.

COnclude, then, without fear to commit thy ſelf to God and a Pious Life: and know that the Almighty has no need of thee, nor made thee for his own ſake, but for thine, that thou might'ſt partake that Hap-

Happiness whereof He was, Essentially, full; and, therefore, He were not wise, but would miss of his End, had He not prepar'd all things convenient to render thee happy. Be thou, then, but confident, and discreetly proceed, and thou shalt quickly find, by experience, what a difference there is between a wicked or negligent, and a truly vertuous and devout Life; how much more pleasant, how much more full of comfort and delight, this is than *that*:

and,

and, how, *sweetly yet strongly*, our wise Creatour has fram'd all the parts of our Felicity, conformable to each other and to the End, for which he has ordain'd us.

The ninth Consideration.

God highly esteems our Felicity; then, how ought we to value It.

The first point.

CONsider. Since Almighty God is essentially happy, and in Possession of all Good; and therefore incapable of the least new addition, by his Creatures: 'tis 1. Creating the World, nay Himself, for Man.

evident that, whatever
he has created, he made
not for his own, but for
thine and thy Brethren's
ſake; not to render him-
ſelf, but thee and them
happy; and, by conſe-
quence, has valew'd your
Felicity, above all the
reſt of his works. Be-
hold, therefore, Heaven,
Earth, and Sea, and all
the Creatures wherewith
he has ſtor'd & adorn'd
them, created for thee
and to bring thee to
happineſs, nor cared for
but as means to that
End: And (which is yet
infinitely

infinitely more, ev'n beyond all amazement) see the Divinity it self humbled and impoverish't to raise and enrich thee; Him, whom, but now, wee concluded through his own fulness incapable of encrease, devested for thy sake, of all his Royal Priviledges, and cloth'd with all our miseries and infirmities: For, what know we, amongst the whole mass of Creatures, so distressed and helpless as a poor Infant newly born? what, so subject to

all kind of contingencies, and inconveniencies? what, requiring so much care and industry, to nurse and breed up to its perfection? Thank on every particular, and see, at how high a rate, the unerrable judgement of the Almighty has valew'd thy happiness.

The second Point.

2. Passing through so painful a Life and Death.

BUt again. Consider the whole Life and Death of *this poor God*, pillag'd of his own, to purchase thy glory. See

a Life of three and thirty long years endur'd, in cõtinual neceſſities, labours, moleſtations, and contradictions. How often was it neceſſary that this moſt meek and innocent Lamb, who *never brake a bruſed Reed, nor quench'd the ſmoaking Flax*, ſhould (to give thee an example of Patience) undergoe the anger and indignation of his enemies? How often, to teach thee Meekneſs and Humility, was He to be chidden, threatned, reproach'd and blaſphem'd, without once

op'ning his mouth to reply? What ſhall I ſay of his Travayls, Sweats, Wearineſs, Lying without dores, Watching whole nights in Prayer, Faſting, Poverty, not having a Houſe wherein to ſhrow'd his Head, living on Alms, continual Dangers and Flying from one place to another; eſpecially in the laſt three years of his Life? O, but His End! Conſider his Anguiſh in the Garden, the manner of his Apprehenſion, his leading, or rather, dragging from one

one Tribunal to another; all sorts of contempt, all manner of insolent and abusive revilements: weigh the Pains he suffer'd in the most tender and sensible parts of his Body; His being Betray'd by One, and Forsaken by the rest of his Disciples; the doleful presence of his deareſt Mother, and other afflicted Friends: In fine, his ignominious Death, and the effusion of the last drop of his Blood, for thy Redemption and eternal Happiness.